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CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. T O W N,

CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.

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*Vomeris buc & falcis bonos, buc omnis aratri  
Cessit amor : recoquunt patrios fornacibus enses :  
Classica jamque sonant : it bello tessera signum.* VIRG.



THE *British* Lion, who has for a long time past been a passive couchant beast, or at most been heard to growl and grumble, now begins to roar again. His tremendous voice has roused the whole nation, and the meanest of the people breathe nothing but war and revenge. The encroachments of the *French* on our colonies are the general topic of conversation, and the popular cry now runs *New England for ever!* Peace or War has been the subject of bets at *White's* as well as debates at the *Robin Hood*; and "a Fleet roasting, new world's new dress, the colonies "in a rope, &c." were, last Sunday, the subjects of a

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prayer

prayer and lecture at the Oratory in *Clare Market*. The theatres also, before they closed the season, entertained us with several warlike Dramas: The *Press Gang* was exhibited at *Covent Garden*; and at *Drury Lane*, the same sea that rolled its canvas billows in pantomime at the beginning of the season, to carry *Harlequin* to *China*, was again put in motion to transport our sailors to *North America*. At present the streets ring with the martial strains of our ballad singers, who are endeavouring, like *Tyrtæus* of old, to rouse their fellow countrymen to battle: while all the polite world are hurrying to *Portsmouth* to see mock-fights, and be regaled on board the Admiral.

THIS posture of affairs has occasioned politics, which have been long neglected as studies useless and impertinent, to become once more fashionable. Religion and politics, though they naturally demand our constant attention, are only cultivated in *England* by fits. Christianity sleeps among us, unless roused by the apprehensions of a plague, an earthquake, or a *Jew-bill*: and we are alarmed for a while at the sudden news of an invasion or a rebellion, but as soon as the danger is over, the *Englishman*, like the soldier recovered from his fright occasioned by *Queen Mab's* drumming in his ear, "swears a prayer or two, and sleeps again." To preach up public spirit, is at some seasons only blowing a dead coal; but at others, an accidental blast kindles the embers, and they mount into flame in an instant. The reign of politics seems at present to be re-commencing. Our newspapers contain dark hints and shrewd conjectures from the *Hague*, *Paris*, and *Madrid*; and spirited orations from *Nova-Scotia*: and the lye of the day is artfully contrived to influence the rise and fall of the money-barometer in  
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*Change-Alley.* This is the present state of politics within the bills of mortality, of which I shall now take no further notice, but submit to the perusal of my readers the following letter from my Cousin VILLAGE on the same important subject.

To Mr. T O W N.

DEAR COUSIN! —, June 30 1755.

WAR, though it has not laid our fields waste nor made our cities desolate, engrosses almost all the attention of this place. Every farm-house swarms with politicians, who lay their wise heads together for the good of the nation, and at every petty chandler's shop in town, while the half quarterns of tea are weighed out, the balance of Europe is adjusted. The preparations now making by sea and land are as popular subjects as the price of hay or the Broad-Wheel-Act. Success to our noble admirals, and a speedy war, are also as common toasts over a mug of ale as a good harvest: though it must be owned, that some selfish farmers, who have not an equal share of public spirit and love of their country with their fellow rustics, are somewhat apprehensive of the influence, which a war may have upon the Land-tax.

I AM at present on a visit to Sir *Politic Hearty*, who is one of those country gentlemen, that are continually athirst for news, and are more anxious about the affairs of the nation, than the care of their own estates. Sir *Politic* is miserable three days in the week for want of fresh intelligence; but his spirits revive at the sound of the post-horn,

horn, when the mail brings him the *London Evening Post*, and a long letter of news from his nephew at the *Temple*. These Sir *Politic* himself reads after dinner to me, the curate of the parish, and the town-apothecary, whom he indulges with the run of his table for their deep insight into the proceedings of the government. He makes many shrewd remarks on every paragraph, and frequently takes the opinion of the two Doctors (for he honours both the curate and apothecary with that title) on the asterisks, dashes, and italics. He has also discovered several mysteries in his Majesty's visit to *Hanover*, has elected a king of the *Romans*, and laid a better plan for discharging the national debt, than has ever yet been proposed by *Jacob Henriques*. Many of his reflections have given me great entertainment but I was never more diverted than at the following droll incident at one of our late privy councils. Sir *Politic's* nephew, who, it seems, has made as great a proficiency in the study of the Humbug as of the law, sent him down, as a serious prophecy, a new pamphlet humourously foretelling the destruction of the *French* from *Ezekiel*. This the unfuspicious Baronet read very gravely over, and then turning to the curate, cried out, "Rare news, doctor!—Come fill a bumper to *Old England*—We have the bible of our side, you see, "and hark ye, Doctor, I'd advise you as a friend to preach "a sermon upon *Thou shalt be desolate, O MOUNT SEIR!*"

NOTHING at first puzzled the honest baronet, and the rest of our country politicians so much as the new seat of war. They were pretty tollerably acquainted with *Brussels*, *Ghent*, *Antwerp*, and the other scenes of action in *Flanders*, but *Virginia*, the *Ohio*, the *Lake Ontario*, &c. (to use a common phrase) were quite out of their latitude. This difficulty

difficulty was however at length surmounted by the templar's transmitting to his uncle one of *D'Arville's* maps, which has enabled the baronet sometimes to delineate the progress of the *French* up the *Ohio* in meanders of port winding along the table, and sometimes to demolish the forts lately raised by the enemy behind *Pensylvania* and at *Crown Point*. Sir *Politic* has indeed studied Monsieur *D'Arville* very thoroughly, and I dare say is better acquainted with his plan of *North America*, than with the map of his own estate.

WAR never fails of producing several groundless and contradictory reports; but if Fame is a lying jade in town, she is the idlest gossip that ever spoke in the country. It is impossible for you, Cousin, or any of your readers, who reside constantly in *London*, to form any tolerable idea of a country news-paper. There is in this town a petty printer who sets his press to work once a week by publishing a journal, which contains advices more extraordinary, if not authentic, than the gazette. It has been his custom for some years past to raise apparitions in country churches, to give accounts of battles fought in the air, comets, and several other preternatural phenomena: but since the rumour of a war, he has dealt in nothing but skirmishes and engagements. He gave the *French* fleet several furious broadsides before it sailed from *Brest*, and has gained us several victories in *Virginia*; though in his last journal he shot off both *Boscawen's* legs, and made him fight, like *Witberington*, on his stumps; and it was but yesterday that Sir *Politic*, on the authority of a letter from his nephew, confuted this intelligence, and set the Admiral on his legs again.



THIS, Cousin, is the present state of politics at —, which I think, in the stile of our news-papers, might cause you much speculation. You would be of great service, if you could persuade our country statesmen that they would be better employed at their rustic occupations than in managing the affairs of the nation, and that many a man would make a scurvy figure at the helm of the state, who is of great use at the plough-tail. As to my friend Sir *Politie*, I should be very glad if he would leave the conduct of the war, and the destination of our fleets and armies to the ministry, who will, I doubt not, adjust matters as prudently as himself, the curate, and apothecary: and I think his thoughts might be more properly exercised in contriving some method of redeeming two heavy mortgages that incumber his estate, than in laying plans for the discharge of the national debt.

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